AUTHORS: **JOHN WATERS,** In Control
& **MIKE HAY,** Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire County Council

Steering My Own Course

The introduction of Self-Directed Support in Cambridgeshire

APRIL 2009

in Control®

Welcome

As a current Direct Payment recipient, it is possible for me to understand the impact Personal Budgets will have on the lives of many people across the nation. Through a long history of struggle, disabled people, older people, and those with mental health issues, have fought for equality and citizenship recognition.

The social care system has for too long clustered people together into client groups and expected them to adapt their needs around available services, with no real acknowledgement of the individuality of each person. Now, with the freedom, choice, control and responsibility offered through Personal Budgets, everyone entitled to social care support will be able to enjoy full lives in a way that suits their individual lifestyles and personalities.

Moreover, Personal Budgets provide the possibility that the voice of service users will be encapsulated within the decision-making processes of their lives.

Fran Williamson
Double Paralympic Beijing Medallist

'Steering My Own Course'

The introduction of Self-Directed Support in Cambridgeshire

Foreword

This report represents an important milestone in the journey that we have started in Cambridgeshire to realise an ambition: that all people who require support from adult social services are able to control how their needs are met and are able to achieve their personal aspirations.

Self-determination is at the heart of this approach and requires a change in the way that professionals engage with and assist people requiring support. We are committed to making this a reality for all people who are eligible for our support.

I would like to thank the individuals and their families who have worked with us through the pilot. They were prepared to try something different even when so many questions could not be answered. Together, we have learnt a huge amount. We are now ready to move on to wider implementation, knowing that we understand a lot more than we did at the beginning of the pilot, but recognising that there will be more to learn as we progress.

We are continuing the journey in a measured way, recognising that some people will be eager to use more creative ways to meet their needs, while others will choose a more traditional approach, and may not wish to alter the current arrangements that they have in place to meet their needs. The key issue here is that people have the choice. I look forward to continuing the work with colleagues in Cambridgeshire County Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire Community Services and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust to empower people requiring social care support. I also look forward to hearing more inspirational stories of how Self-Directed Support and Personal Budgets have changed people's lives.

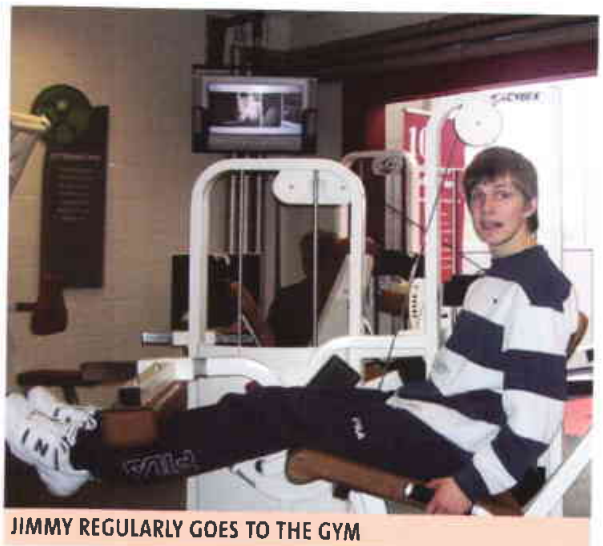
Claire Bruin
Service Director Adult Support Services

Introduction

This report describes work undertaken in Cambridgeshire between October 2005 and December 2008. The work was undertaken to learn about a new way of organising the social care system in the County, and led to 56 people with learning disabilities and their families taking control of a Personal Budget allocated to them by the Local Authority. People used their Personal Budget to design develop and implement an individual support package.

Personalising support in this way, through the use of Personal Budgets, is now at the heart of national government policy. Following the success of the work described here, Cambridgeshire County Council has committed to ensuring Personal Budgets are readily available to all people in the County who qualify for social care support.

This report is a summary of our early work and learning to date. The findings draw heavily on the experiences and views of disabled people, their families and frontline staff who helped us take our first steps towards personalising our approach to social care in the County. We are very grateful to them.



JIMMY REGULARLY GOES TO THE GYM

The National context

A surprisingly large number of people in our communities need some form of help with day-to-day life. Help might be needed for a whole range of reasons including poor mental health, learning and physical disabilities, or age-related conditions.

Nearly a million and a half adults in England receive support from the state with different aspects of day-to-day life. This can mean help with washing, dressing, managing household affairs or getting out and about safely. In addition, some six million family carers offer support to disabled or older family members, often at the expense of their own health and well-being.

Despite this high level of support from family members, some £17.5 billion is spent from the public purse on social care services each year, a figure that is set to grow rapidly over the next two decades. In 2007-2008, 16,357 Cambridgeshire people received some form of state-funded social care. The County Council and its partners spent just over £122 million on social care in the County.

Given this scale, social care is clearly of significance to us all. Its impact is not confined to those who currently need direct support.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection (The government's social care watchdog) has regularly published reports demonstrating how the existing social care system struggles to deliver good outcomes for individuals and their families.

A recent report detailing a review of the present arrangement for accessing state-funded social care criticised the current approach (Fair Access to Care) for, amongst other things:

* a lack of clarity and transparency
* a lack of fairness
* the continuing influence of service-led, rather than needs-led approaches
* insularity and fragmentation.

Another report from the same body, Time for care, considered home care services and noted:
'Most councils restrict the help they will offer to a list of prescribed activities. Care managers draw up individual care plans that tightly specify both the tasks to be undertaken and the time to be devoted to these tasks.'

This is in stark contrast to the stated social policy in which the Department of Health has long-term ambitions.

Ambitions for social care

Over the next 10 to 15 years, we want to work with people who use social care to help them transform their lives by:

* ensuring they have more control
* giving them more choices and helping them decide how their needs can best be met
* giving them the chance to do the things that other people take for granted
* giving the best quality of support and protection to those with the highest levels of need.

At present, accessing social care typically means becoming a recipient of one of a small number of pre-commissioned services. These services normally take the form of personal care at home, care in a day centre, or a place in a residential home.

It is evident that the achievement of these challenging and admirable ambitions will require a radical transformation.

In Control

A social enterprise, In Control, has been working since 2003 to transform the current social care system. In Control has worked in partnership with central government, local authorities and people who need support to figure out a new way of organising the social care system in the UK.

The intention of the work has been to ensure that those people who need support are able to lead lives as full and active citizens. In Control's work draws from and supports work undertaken by disabled people themselves, the independent living movement. All of In Control's learning is shared openly across central and local government.

In Control's work to reform social care features key innovations such as resource allocation and Personal Budgets within a wider system of Self-Directed Support. These innovations hold potential for wider welfare reform.

A new operating system for social care

In Control offers a new operating system for social care. This system is built around a seven-step model of Self-Directed Support. Unlike the existing system, Self-Directed Support has at its heart the individual, their family and their community, rather than services. Self-Directed Support is underpinned by a belief that disabled people and their families have both the capacity and the right to control the support they need to live full and active lives.

Instead of just placing a person into an existing service, Self-Directed Support is designed to allow the person and their family as much control over their support as is possible. To do this, it draws on existing good practice such as person-centred planning, and introduces some new ideas, such as a Personal Budget and a Resource Allocation System.

BUDDING CHEF

Self-Directed Support is broken down into seven steps

1. Money

If people are to direct their own support, it is important to be clear early on how much money is available to use in a support plan and the outcomes it must be used to achieve. To do this, the local authority must develop a Resource Allocation System (RAS).

2. Making a support plan

If people are to have support that is personal to them, there needs to be a good plan describing what that support will look like and what it will achieve. It is important that the person and those close to them lead this planning process.

3. Agreeing the plan

As the local authority is making money available to fund the support plan, it is reasonable that it will want to agree how that money is used. The local authority also needs to ensure it is happy with any risks the person may be choosing to take.

4. Organising money

Once the money and the plan are agreed, the person needs to be in control of the money so they can direct their support. There are different ways this can be achieved. Taking the cash directly is not right for everyone.

A Resource Allocation System (RAS)

The RAS takes the form of a simple self-assessment questionnaire that lets people know early in the process how much money is available to them from the local authority to fund their support. It also clearly states the intended outcomes of their support plan. The RAS gives an indication of the maximum amount of money that should be in someone's Personal Budget and what it must achieve.

The Personal Budget

A Personal Budget is the money made available to an individual to develop a support plan. The money can be held by the person him or herself, by their representative, or by the local authority. The important thing is that the person and those close to them have control of the money.

Knowing how much money is available and what outcomes must be achieved, the person and their family can take control of their Personal Budget and plan how it is used. Once the person or those closest to them have developed a plan, the local authority is asked to approve the plan and arrange payment. This important check provides a mechanism through which the authority is able to meet its wider social and financial responsibilities.

5. Organising the support

Now that the budget is under the control of the person, they can arrange for the support to be delivered. This can involve such things as buying equipment or recruiting staff.

6. Living life

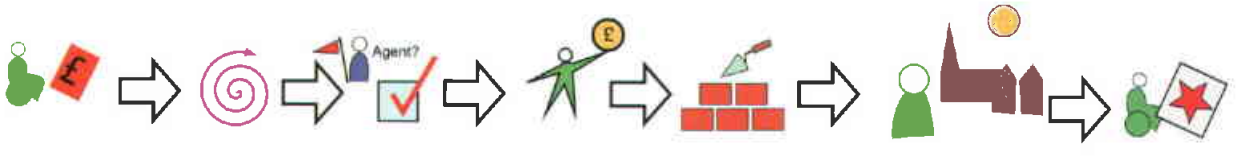
When people are supported in ways and at times that are right for them, it is possible to live a full and active life.

7. Seeing how it worked

It is important to take time to look at how well the plan has worked and to show what the money has been used to achieve.

Approaching social care with this seven-step approach seems to have a number of potential benefits:

* The person knows the maximum cost of a support plan and they have a vested interest in ensuring that the money is spent well.



1. My Money: Finding Out How Much | 2. Making My Plan | 3. Getting My Plan Agreed | 4. Organising My Money | 5. Organising My Support | 6. Living My Life | 7. Seeing How It's Worked

- Each step can be led by the person or those in their family, drawing on support from professionals only if needed and desirable. This means professional staff are able to dedicate their time to those who most need their help.
- As the money is set early on in a transparent way, people can draw on a range of other support systems (friends, family, community) free from the fear that the local authority may withdraw its help if they do use other support systems.
- As people have control over the money, they are able to choose existing services or design their own bespoke support. They can avoid being slotted into services that are not able to meet their unique needs. This leads to innovation.
- Social workers are not forced to act as 'gate-keepers' of the public purse (a role that the current system of social care requires of them). This is important as it allows social workers to form trusting relationships and to help people they serve to plan creatively.
- As resources are allocated on an individual basis, it is easier to ensure that people get resources that match their level of needs.

Self-Directed Support in Cambridgeshire

In October 2005, the learning disability service in Cambridgeshire set about testing the ideas of Self-Directed Support in two areas of the County supported by two community teams (City and South).

The first phase of our work involved offering 10 people control of a Personal Budget and helping them to design a personalised support plan. By April 2007, this had been achieved and the approach appeared to be affordable, to lead to good outcomes and to be popular with both people needing support and their families. So it was decided to extend the availability of Personal Budgets. In April 2007, Personal Budgets were being offered to all people with a learning disability in the two pilot areas who were approaching the learning disability service for help.

By December 2008, 56 people had control of their own Personal Budget and we decided to evaluate the impact of these Budgets. The findings from this evaluation are shared later in this report.

Building a Resource Allocation System

In order to give people a Personal Budget, we needed to have a way of working out how much money each person should have. This Budget needed to be informed both by the impact of their disability on their life and by their family circumstances. We needed a Resource Allocation System (RAS). We knew that, if we wanted to make Personal Budgets widely available in the future, we would have to develop a RAS that made allocations that were affordable for the Authority and allowed individuals to develop support plans that improved their quality of life.

We also wanted the RAS to be simple and easy to use. Also, it was important that the RAS was seen to be fair. We based our approach on the work In Control had done elsewhere. **We used a simple multiple-choice questionnaire that measured people's needs and social circumstances in the following areas:**

- looking after myself
- relationships
- being part of the local community
- work, learning and leisure
- making decisions
- staying safe from harm
- complex needs and risk
- family support.

The questionnaire produced a score that we matched to a funding level. We set funding levels by looking at the typical costs of services provided to all 260 people in the two areas.

The questionnaire also indicated to people a set of outcomes that their plan should be designed to achieve. By doing this we were later able to agree that people spend their money on things that ordinarily wouldn't be available through social care funding.

Helping people plan

In the first phase of work, a consultant from an independent organisation, Paradigm, supported the 10 families involved. This phase showed how important it is to ensure people have good plans, so when we decided to make Personal Budgets more widely available, we invested in two family support workers. The family support worker role involved working alongside care managers and families to advise on support planning.

They also undertook an exercise to develop packs of information including a map of support options available in each area. This included typical social care providers but also identified a range of other services and facilities in the local community that would be of interest to people when they were planning their support. **The map of support options included:**

* day centres
* social firms and organisations
* education
* sport and leisure
* payroll
* care agencies
* housing.

The pack was available to families when they were planning how to spend their Personal Budget. As well as giving people information about local resources, we also shared examples of other people's plans. This seemed to help creative thinking.

When we first started our work, we were very clear that people had to have a person-centred plan that covered all areas of their life and then produce a separate support plan detailing how their Personal Budget was to be spent.

Over time, we realised this distinction was unhelpful and we just asked people to provide one plan that set out how:

* the outcomes, established by the RAS, were to be met
* the money was to be spent
* the money was to be managed
* any change of circumstances would be managed.

We said that before we could approve the plan we also needed to be sure that the plan was:

* about the person not services
* legal
* not exposing any one to undue risk.

This meant that people presented their plans to us in a whole range of ways and we welcomed their creativity.

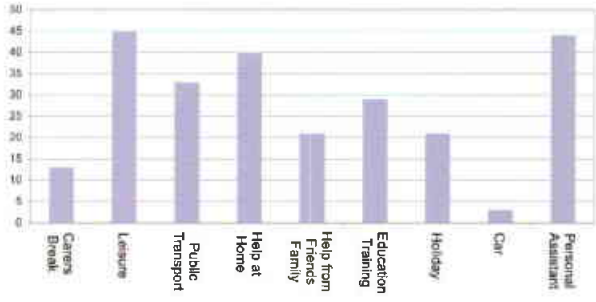
Agreeing plans

People's plans were agreed by budget-holders at a panel. Despite having been clear about what the plans must contain and having established outcomes with people, their level of creativity challenged us.

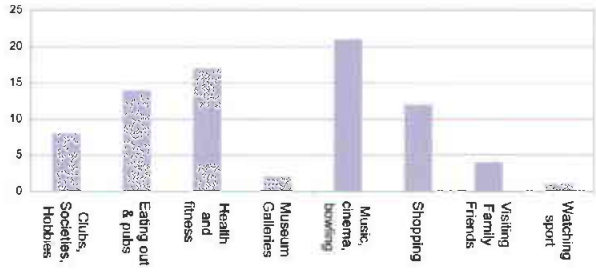
The Local Authority is required to work to eligibility criteria that have been set to meet critical and substantial levels of need. We also share the Department of Health's ambition to ***offer people 'more choices and help them decide how their needs can best be met'***. So when people's plans included spending money on things we would not ordinarily fund to meet critical and substantial needs, we had to think hard about our responsibility to spend public money well.

One plan included spending part of a Personal Budget on money towards a holiday. We concluded that, while a holiday might not traditionally have been seen as meeting critical or substantial needs, there was a critical need to support the person's family relationships. Self-Directed Support relies on individuals knowing best how their needs can be met. The plan was approved.

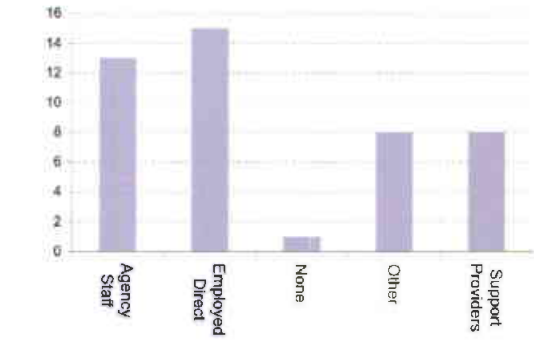
How people used their personal budget



Leisure activities people used their budget for



How people employed supporter workers



Holding the money

Once people had their plans approved, we either made a direct payment into their bank account or we held their money on their behalf and commissioned their support for them. 38 of the 56 participants had Direct Payments. The Local Authority held the other 18 budgets.

How people used their Personal Budgets

In order to understand how people had chosen to spend their Personal Budget, we analysed their support plans. We looked at the different things people had support to do and categorised these. We then counted instances in each category.

The largest category was leisure, so this was subdivided and analysed in a similar way.

We also looked at the arrangements people had made to get their support (how staff were employed).

Nearly everyone used some of their budget to pay staff. The largest single group, fifteen people, made arrangements to employ people directly. Eight people employed service providers (18%).

The evaluation

How we evaluated our work

We wanted to know whether allocating Personal Budgets had made a difference to people's lives. **We looked at the impact of Personal Budgets on three different groups of people:**

* people who had Personal Budgets
* family carers of people who had Personal Budgets
* Care Managers who had helped people plan.

For each group we used a structured questionnaire focusing on areas of interest to that group. Each questionnaire included a number of questions with fixed answers so that we could aggregate the responses of the group. There was also space for respondents to comment freely on issues.

For people taking control of Personal Budgets we asked how life had changed recently and whether the change resulted from having a Personal Budget.

Areas of enquiry included:

* health and well-being
* social life
* control over support
* dignity in support
* feeling safe.

For family carers, we asked about the things that had been identified in the national carers' strategy as being important.

Areas of enquiry included:

* financial situation
* continuing to care and remain well
* social life
* carers' physical and mental well-being
* quality of life
* effect on caring relationship
* experience of the planning process.

For staff, we wanted to know how the changes had affected their ability to do a good job.

The Care Management group were asked how Personal Budgets had affected their ability to make a positive difference to people's lives. They were asked about:

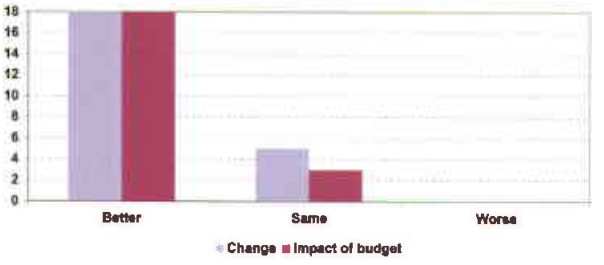
* helping people maintain existing support networks
* supporting people to take control and make choices
* helping people plan creatively.

We sent the questionnaires to relevant people and followed this with a telephone call to encourage people to respond to the questionnaire.

Respondents	Sent	Returned	%
Budget holder	55	26	47
Carers	36	24	67
Social Workers	12	12	100

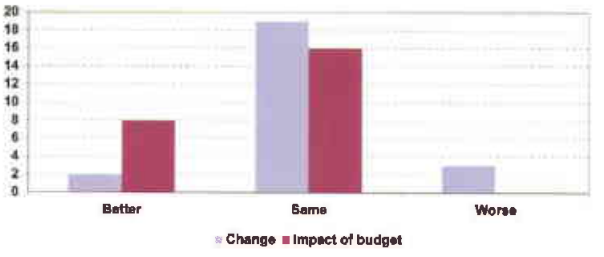
Results from the family carers questionnaires:

Have you had more control or less control over the support you use?

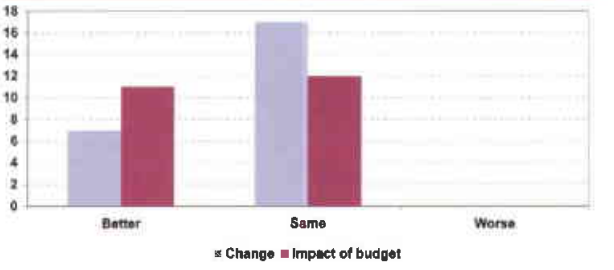


In the past year, have you felt more safe or less safe when you go out?

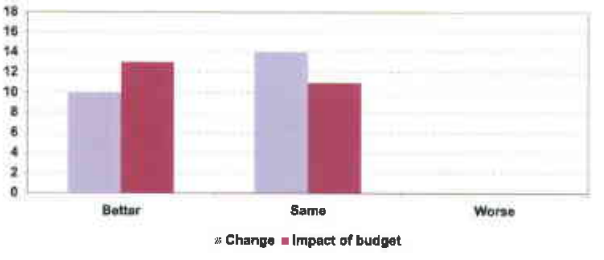
Over the past year, has your health got (a) better, (b) stayed same, (c) got worse



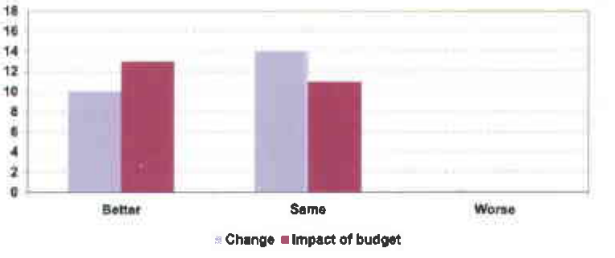
Would you say your social life has (a) got better, (b) stayed same, (c) got worse?



In the past year, have you felt more safe or less safe when you are at home?

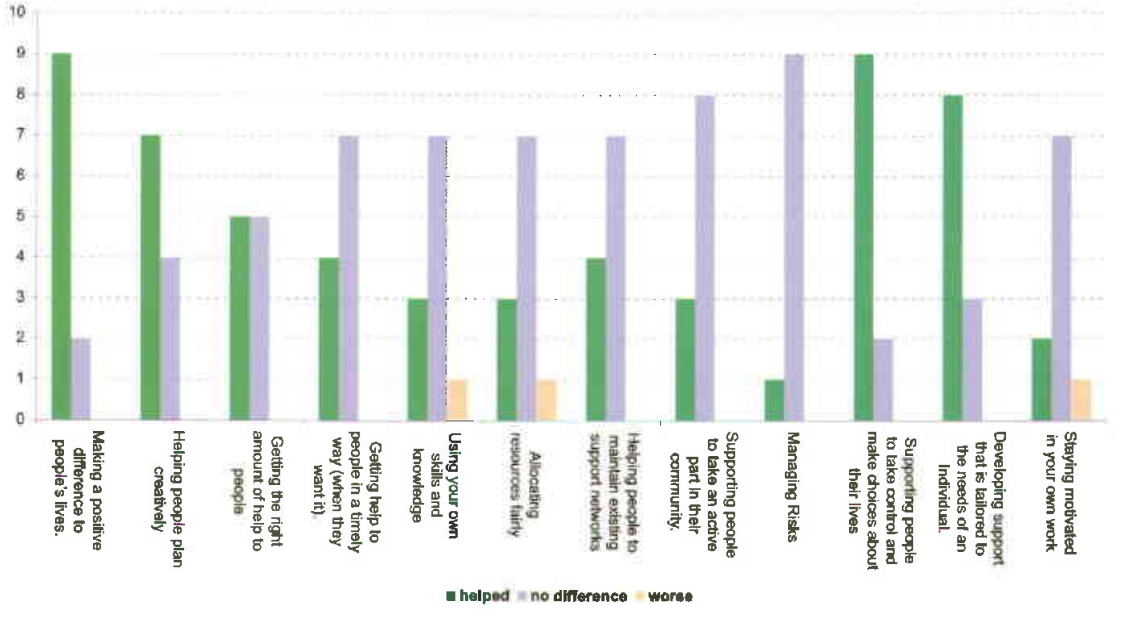


Have the people supporting you treated you with more dignity or less dignity?



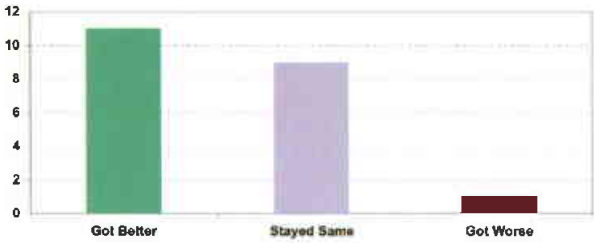
Results from the staff questionnaires:

For area of your work say if having a personal budget has: (a) helped, (b) made things worse, (c) made no difference

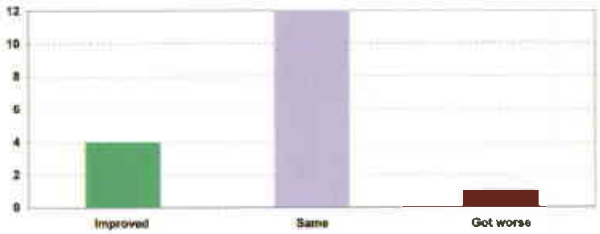


Results from the family carers questionnaires:

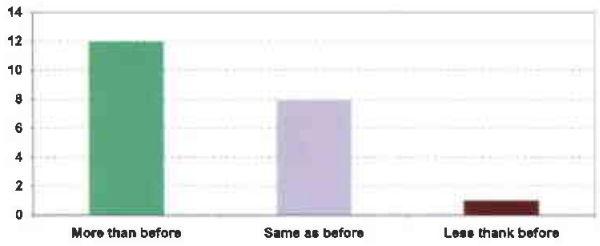
Do you feel your financial situation has changed as a result of the person you care for having a personal budget?



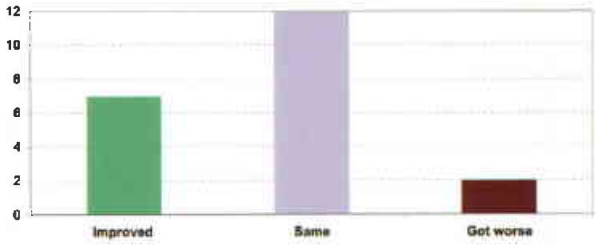
What effect has the personal budget had on your capacity to undertake paid work?



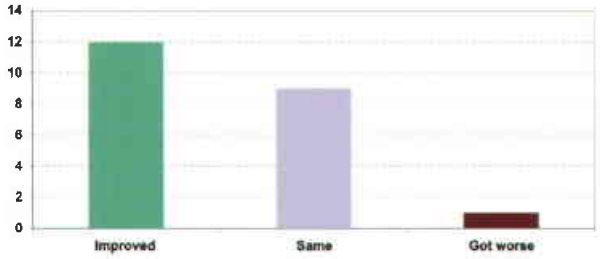
To what extent do you now feel you have the support you need to continue caring and remain well?



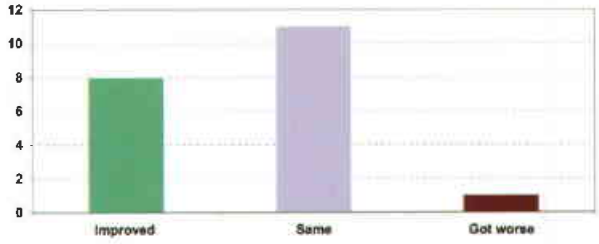
What effect has the personal budget had on the relationship you have with the person you care for?



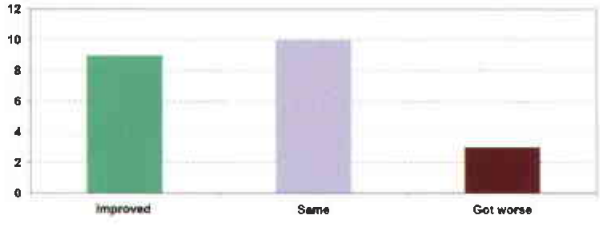
What effect has the personal budget had on your quality of life?



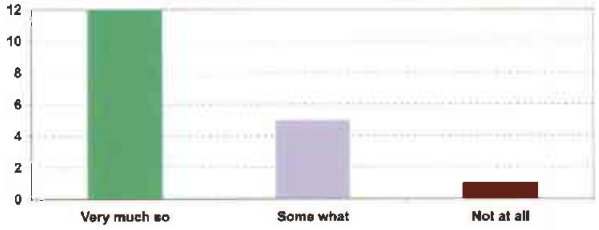
What effect has the personal budget had on the level of choice and control you have over the important things in your life?



What effect has the personal budget had on your own mental and physical wellbeing?

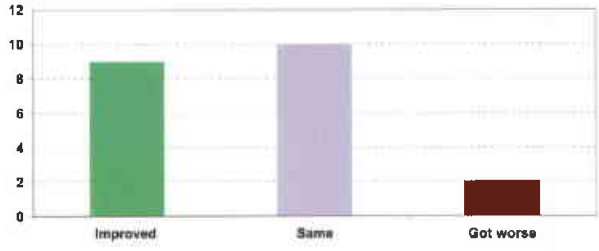


In the work to develop the support plan for the person you care for, how far would you say you felt you were an equal party with expertise to contribute?



What effect has the personal budget had on your capacity to have a social life or follow leisure activity?

What effect has the personal budget had on other significant relationships (family and friends) in your life?



Alan's story

Like many young men, Alan planned to share a house with a friend after leaving college. But, in his third and final year, he decided that he didn't want to finish his course and came home to live with his family in a small village south of Cambridge.

Alan has Down's Syndrome. His family talked to him about what he wanted from his life. He didn't like the idea of going to a day centre and he didn't want to do another college course. He wanted to do things he enjoyed, like going to the gym, bowling, shopping and activities like cooking, writing and photography.

After finding out about Personal Budgets, the family put all of Alan's interests into a weekly plan. The plan was agreed with Alan's mother acting as his agent and managing the Personal Budget on his behalf. She keeps the books, manages the payroll and expenses and, together with Alan, recruits his personal assistants (PAs).

One year into his Personal Budget, Alan is really making the most of the opportunities it has given him. His week is full of the things he likes to do as well as the things that he needs to do.

He goes to the local gym, shopping and bowling, and spends time at home when he cleans his room and cooks his lunches. He makes decisions about how he wants to be supported and the role he wants his PAs to take.

Alan's mother says: *'Alan is gaining confidence by the day, his general health has improved and he is now a very fit young man. He has taken up running, including completing a half-marathon, and swims at the local pool three times a week. He has plans to go back to college one day a week to take a pottery course. He is also looking for work experience as one of his goals is to have a job.'*

Alan is well known in the village where he lives. His PAs are local people who know Alan and are interested in being with him and helping him to make the most of his interests. With his new-found confidence, Alan is now thinking about a home of his own again – although not just yet!

Alice's story

Alice is able to do a lot of things, but needs help with daily living and keeping safe. She comes from a close family and wanted to stay near her parents and friends when she left college. But she didn't want a residential home or a supported living scheme where she couldn't choose who she lived with.

While in college, Alice and her family attended a New Partnership Project meeting where a speaker from a housing association spoke about shared ownership. They were keen to explore this further as a way of enabling Alice to live in the village she grew up in, living close to her family, and having a choice of who she might share her home with. The family put together a plan using Alice's Personal Budget. It gave Alice some support during her holidays from college, where she was a weekly boarder, and listed what she would like to do when she was at home.

A local registered social landlord agreed that shared ownership was a real possibility. Alice and her family contacted an organisation that facilitates mortgages for people with disabilities. For a small amount of her Personal Budget, they secured the mortgage, sorted out the income support mortgage payment, handled the housing benefit application and made sure that the finances between the registered social landlord and Alice were managed on Alice's behalf.

Alice found a house in the village. She shares the house with her friend Rob who also has a Personal Budget. They share the overnight support that they both need but have their own PAs, recruited through an independent provider. Alice and Rob are very happy in their home. They moved in in 2008 and are now looking for a third person to share with them.

Jimmy's story

Jimmy is an energetic young man with autism and a learning disability. It is important that he receives the right type of support to enable him to do one-to-one basic learning exercises as well as undertaking a mixture of activities that develop important life skills and give him the daily exercise he needs.

Prior to getting his Personal Budget, Jimmy attended generic college courses but these were not specific to his individual needs.

Jimmy has had a Personal Budget since 2007. His family organises his support plan and has been able to tailor this to meet Jimmy's individual needs. The flexibility of a Personal Budget has really helped and it has been easy to modify Jimmy's plan to reflect his changing interests.

Jimmy's father says: *'Jimmy's Personal Budget has had a significant impact on his life. It has allowed him to participate in regular activities such as rowing, trampolining, going to the gym, visiting social clubs for disabled people and walking the dogs. He has developed an interest in photography and attends cooking and woodwork classes with his helpers. It has also enabled him to employ four different support workers, as he needs the variety that they give him.'*

Since having a Personal Budget Jimmy has moved into independent living accommodation and has been able to transfer the skills he has learnt in his classes into his own home. His support plan contains elements of learning (in particular basic reading, writing and counting) as well as more domestic tasks such as making the bed, cooking and cleaning. It also includes one-to-one tuition, which, unlike his old college course, is helping him to excel in his life skills.

Jimmy's father says *'We have found it easier to plan for Jimmy's future because we are aware of the budget available to support him upfront. His Personal Budget has enabled Jimmy to flourish. He is much happier in his living circumstances and with his daily routine. He is much calmer, and this has had a knock-on effect on the whole family.'*

Dev's story

Dev is a young man with learning disability who lives at home with his family. He has had a Personal Budget for a year. Before receiving his Personal Budget, Dev did not go out or take part in any activities. He felt very low. He lacked self-confidence and self-esteem and his family life was affected.

Dev's sister manages his Personal Budget which she says has changed the whole family's lives in a positive way: *'Dev now goes out horse riding, swimming and for regular walks. He also goes out with support from agency workers and this has helped improve his confidence and enabled him to do things without his family. In turn this has helped the family unit to be sustained and improved things for the family as well as Dev.'*

In future Dev would like to continue the activities he now enjoys, but also plans to try and experience new things.

His support plan shows the intention to use some of his Personal Budget to buy a computer for Dev to use at home to help his communication.

'His Personal Budget has given Dev the opportunity to do many different things and to explore new opportunities,' his sister says. 'It has enabled him to socialise more and be more involved in the community. It has helped him to go out where before he was not leaving home. It has been a fantastic move for him and has improved his quality of life immensely.'

What people made of the findings

Having undertaken the evaluation of our work, we shared our findings with people locally who we knew had an active interest in social care. We held one seminar with an established reference group. This group is made up of a wide range of stakeholders from all the different social care groups and includes representatives of existing service users, family carers, voluntary organisations, County Council service managers and elected members.

We held a second seminar just for the social work staff involved in the project. Both groups were presented with a short overview of the work and a summary of the findings. This was followed by a facilitated group discussion.

The social work (Care Manager) seminar

The group noted first of all that the results of the evaluation were very positive, and this was in line with their experience of taking the work forward. The group said that Personal Budgets had helped them to support people to create some really imaginative care packages and, as a result, they had seen people's lives improve.

Thinking about their own roles, the social workers indicated that the work had helped them to broaden their own view of possible support solutions and include as a support option the everyday activity going on in the community. This included things that they wouldn't previously have thought of, for example, needs met through a traditional respite service could be met by support to go on holiday.

They felt that there had been some increase in workload, but suspected that some of this would be temporary as people with Personal Budgets and their families needed help to build confidence and to take more responsibility for planning their own support.

One Care Manager said *'When people first experience Self-Directed Support, they make a lot of calls to the Care Manager, asking for permission to do things and it takes them a while to realise that they don't have to keep doing this.'*

Reflecting on areas that the evaluation had indicated hadn't changed significantly, the group felt that motivation was high within the Care Management teams already, and this may be why Personal Budgets hadn't produced a reported increase in staff motivation – or an increase in use of skills and knowledge.

One Care Manager noted what a culture shift Personal Budgets involved for many families and that a change in expectations would take time. The group also pointed out difficulties associated with running two different systems at one time.

Lessons from Experience

Much of the work described in this report was led by **Lyn Jenkins**, *Community Development Manager*. In this section Lyn reflects on her learning.

Despite having worked in social care for over 30 years, I feel I learned a great deal during the course of this work. In particular I found that:

* **The planning process is very important:** Sometimes people need a lot of help to think creatively about how their needs can be met. It helps if people feel they own their own Plan.
* **Clear Outcomes are essential:** It is essential to ensure people have identified the outcomes that they want their plan to achieve. If the outcomes are clear it is easier for people to use their personal budgets in innovative ways.
* **Personal budgets can work for family members too:** Personal budgets are not just about people who need support, family members are saying they are helpful too. The positive results of our survey reinforced the things family members have said to me about their experiences.
* **We offer different ways of holding personal budgets:** People don't have to take control of the money directly. Not everyone took a direct payment, but we still managed to support individual choice and control where people asked the Local Authority to manage their budget.

The seminar with interested parties

The group was pleased to note the positive results of the evaluation and welcomed the opportunity to consider the implications of the work for wider changes in Cambridgeshire.

The group had a particular interest in the impact of Self-Directed Support on carers. The favourable results in this area were viewed as very encouraging. There was particular concern that carers shouldn't be pressured to take on additional responsibilities. It was felt to be important that the RAS factored in only the amount of support that carers were able and willing to offer.

The group felt that the evaluation was a helpful contribution to an on-going process of change. Thinking about what needed to happen if more people were to benefit from Personal Budgets, the group felt that local providers and community organisations had a central role to play. There was also keen interest in the idea of individual service funds, an arrangement in which an organisation is asked to hold the money but the person still controls their Personal Budget. This was felt to be an option that many people would choose.

Next steps

Following the success of the pilot in our learning disability service, we set ourselves a new challenge: to make Personal Budgets widely available and totally transform our approach to social care. We have set ourselves the target of making Personal Budgets available to the majority of new and existing service users by April 2010.

People who now have a Personal Budget have shared their learning with us and told us their stories of change. We are now sharing these experiences with our existing service users, their families, service providers and our social work professionals. This has involved Personal Budget holders and their families giving presentations about their experiences to a range of audiences.

Transforming our whole approach is a complex task and we have established a programme board to lead these changes. This board is supported by a formal reference group made up of existing service users, carers and representatives from voluntary organisations who are now working with us to develop and implement our transformation programme.

PLANS ARE EASILY MODIFIED TO REFLECT CHANGING INTERESTS

The programme board is committed to ensuring that, in the future, Self-Directed Support and Personal Budgets will be at the heart of what we do, enabling us to work in partnership with local people who need support and their families. The board has approved a phased roll-out plan designed to ensure that, in the coming months and years, the increased choice and control that Personal Budgets offer is available to an increasing number of service users across the County.

Personal budgets will be available to:

* people with learning disabilities from April 2009
* people with physical disabilities from July 2009
* people with sensory impairments from January 2010
* older people's service and older people's mental health teams from August 2009
* people with mental health needs from January 2010.

People already receiving services will have Personal Budgets made available to them at the next annual review of their current support arrangements. As these changes begin to roll out we will continue to review and monitor outcomes, both for individuals and for the social care system in Cambridgeshire.

We are rightly proud of the achievements of the pilot and grateful to the individuals and families who have worked with us and helped us to learn from their early experiences of Self-Directed Support and Personal Budgets.

In October 2005, the learning disability service in Cambridgeshire set about testing the ideas of Self-Directed Support. This testing involved giving people with learning disabilities their own Personal Budget with which they could create their own individual support packages. By December 2008, 56 people had control of their own Personal Budget, and it was decided to evaluate the impact of these individualised Budgets. The findings from this evaluation are shared in this report.

This report is an account of our work and the things we believe we have learned by implementing Self-Directed Support in Cambridgeshire. The findings are not intended to represent the results of an academic study. Rather, they are a critical self-evaluation of our progress to date. The findings represent our best attempt to understand and report the things people have said to us about their experience of taking control of a Personal Budget.

Cambridgeshire County Council

Transformation Team
Cambridgeshire County Council
RES 1209
Shire Hall
Castle Hill
Cambridge
CB3 0AP
Tel: 01223 699650
Email: in.controltotal@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

in Control®

in Control Partnerships
Tel: 0121 708 3031
Email: admin@in-control.org.uk
Website: www.in-control.org.uk

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Learning Disability LDP Partnership

If you would like a copy of this leaflet on audio cassette, in Braille, large print or other languages, please contact the In Control Total Communications Officer on 01223 699650 or at in.controltotal@cambridgeshire.gov.uk